

Ministerial Department.

BIBLE HISTORY.

BY J. ALLEN MILLER.

I. Lesson: All of Chapter I. Pages 9 to 24.

II. Reference: Gen. chs. I-III.

III. Outline.

1. Introduction.

a. Includes Ancient Geography, History, Chronology, Anthropology, etc. b. Relation of Bible History to General History. c. Practical Utility of such knowledge.

2. The Creation.

a. Fix in your mind the Doctrine of the Bible. b. Note the order of Creation, viz. first day's work, etc. from a Biblical standpoint. c. Compare this Bible-Order with Geology and note points of agreement and difference. d. Compare also with the "Chaldean Genesis." e. Note the division of time and the Sabbath.

3. Paradise and the Fall.

a. Man's Employment. b. Where is Eden? c. What of the trees in the garden? d. Did the serpent tempt Eve? e. Note the Fall: Note its punishment. f. Mark the Promise. g. With the Biblical Teachings compare the Traditions as to

(1.) A Golden Age.

(2.) Sacred Trees.

(3.) The Serpent.

4. The Fall and its Results.

Notes.

"Bible History is the history of God's kingdom upon the earth." (Blaikie.)

"The two eyes of history are Chronology and Geography." (Weidner.) Compare Gen. iii, 6 with 1 John ii, 16.

If you will read twenty minutes a day you can not only read the text but Genesis also and have time for thought. At the end of the course you will be astonished at the knowledge thus obtained.

It is my purpose from time to time to give practical observations under each lesson. May the Spirit of God direct our study to his Glory and our blessing.

WHAT THE CHURCH CAN AND SHOULD DO DURING 1894.

During the past year there was much work done which resulted in fourteen hundred and seventy-eight accessions by baptism, and one hundred and fifty-seven by relation; a total of sixteen hundred and thirty-five. This approximation is as nearly correct as it was possible to get it from the diversified ways of reporting accessions.

During 1894 accessions *only* should be reported, leaving prospectives omit-

ted. The latter are an unknown quantity.

The number of accessions should be greatly increased during this year over those of '93. This can be done if our preachers will make a reasonable, rational, practical, common sense effort to do it; that is, interpret scripture by the common and established rules of interpretation universally acknowledged on all questions except theology. It is a strange, incomprehensible fact that in every book but the Bible sprinkle means sprinkle; pour means pour; supper means an evening meal; a kiss means a kiss. In the Bible sprinkle and pour, two distinct words, both mean baptism; supper means a mere crumb of bread eaten in the forenoon; a kiss means an imagination. What "stuff" theologians have been passing off on credulous humanity. If all rules of interpretation were as thoroughly disregarded in literature generally as they are in connection with the Bible no two persons could understand each other; because there would be no way of conveying correct ideas except by tangible demonstration. During this year of 1894 every preacher *can and should* make this the key note of his or her pulpit efforts—a literal interpretation of scripture in its primary sense whenever it is possible. If this is done there will be a large increase of our membership on a solid foundation which cannot be shaken. If the scriptures had been written by a novice in an illiterate age there might be some excuse for the general laxity in their interpretation, but when we consider that they were given partly by inspiration and partly by the Son of God himself, and translated, and re-translated in every age by the most eminent scholars of all ages there can be no excuse for deviating from the literal text. During this year there *can and should* be thorough organization of every auxiliary society in the church for general work. At present there are a number of young people's societies throughout the church under different names—all of them, no doubt, doing good local work. These should all be brought unto one compact for general work of some kind. Let it be educational, missionary, true church extension, or any other work that will benefit mankind, honor God, and give fame and a name to our young people.

Let something be done. The Sister's Societies are in much the same condition as the young people's. The same words of advice and encouragement therefore apply to them. '94 *can and should* be a year of great advancement in the unification and extension of the sisters' work. The preachers association I suppose will get on without any advice from a layman. I will therefore let them "hoe their own row."

A national church extension society can, and should, by all means be established this year. Something in the nature of a Building and Loan Society. The General Missionary Society might take up this branch of the work. As it appears to be out of work, or rather it has never got down to actual work yet. At present I know of no better field in which that Society could do effective work than to assist small and poor churches in securing houses of worship. Ashland University should be re-opened during the year as a distinctively Brethren's School. A Brethren's Hymnal should at least be brought to an advanced stage during the year, even if it cannot be completed and published.

The history of our organization should be ready by the end of this year. Many of the new converts know nothing of our early history even though we are yet young. They ought to be able to get a reliable book that will tell the whole story.

Between now and next conference some one should prepare for approval a historical work in support of our "Gospel alone" platform, giving references and copious quotations from the writings of the "fathers" and early historians in support of our position and our interpretation of Scripture. This is very important. Rare historical works are at the command of but very few. A complete compilation of the obtainable data bearing upon our church would be a great advantage to our teachers and preachers.

Next August we should have a great conference at Ashland. Not only a general church conference, but a fully represented conference of the King's Children, of Sisters Society of Christian Endeavor and of the Sunday school workers. Each of the above societies should have a day to itself.